DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 026 HE 015 385

AUTHOR Campbell, Jill F.; Spiro, Louis M.
TITLE Evaluation of the Impact of Media Marketing Strategies on Continuing Education Enrollments. AIR Forum 1982 Paper.
PUB DATE May 82
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (22nd, Denver, CO, May 16-19, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Students; *Advertising; *Continuing Education; *Enrollment Influences; Enrollment Trends; Higher Education; Institutional Research; *Marketing; *Mass Media; Media Selection; News Media; Outreach Programs; State Universities; *Student Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS *AIR Forum; State University of New York Coll at Brockport

ABSTRACT

The impact of media marketing strategies on continuing education enrollment at the State University of New York College at Brockport (SUNY-CB), was evaluated. The evaluation of advertising impacts used advertising records of SUNY-CB and other area colleges and a telephone questionnaire instrument. A stratified, random countywide sample, in addition to the college continuing education students, was surveyed to determine the differential impact of media types and the media impact on the college's new and returning continuing education students as well as on the general population sample. Of the 400 continuing education students enrolled in the fall 1981 semester in credit courses, 215 participated in the telephone survey, in addition to 290 countywide respondents. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis of responses. The primary way in which the respondents heard about the college's continuing education offerings was determined. Respondents were asked whether they saw or heard any advertisements for the continuing education program, and whether the marketing strategies encouraged previous students to continue, or attracted new students. Another aspect of the research was to identify advertising conducted through the local media by other area colleges. It was found that: (1) respondents were not very aware of the college's advertisements; (2) the electronic media appeared to have had little or no impact on either respondent group; (3) newspapers seemed to be the most effective media; and (4) direct mail was an effective approach. These findings provide the basis for four recommendations regarding the school's marketing approaches, including centralizing marketing efforts and enhancing program reputation among faculty and students. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED220026

12L 41

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES ON CONTINUING EDUCATION ENROLLMENTS

Jill F. Campbell
Analytic Studies Assistant
State University of New York
College at Brockport
612 Administration Building
Brockport, New York 14420
(716) 395-2283

Louis M. Spiro
Director of Analytic Studies
State University of New York
College at Brockport
611 Administration Building
Brockport, New York 14420
(716) 395-2283

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

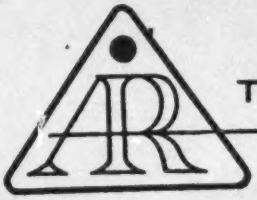
"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Association for

~~Institutional Research~~

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HE015 385



THE ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

This paper was presented at the Twenty-Second Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Denver Hilton Hotel in Denver, Colorado, May 16-19, 1982. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum papers.

D. R. Coleman, Chairman
Forum Publication
Advisory Committee

Abstract

In order to attract continuing education students, the State University of New York College at Brockport (SUNY-CB) has taken a media marketing approach. To determine advertising impact, an evaluation was undertaken utilizing advertising records of SUNY-CB and other area colleges and a telephone questionnaire instrument. A stratified, random county-wide sample, in addition to the college's continuing education students, was surveyed. From this study it was possible to determine the differential impact of media types and the media impact on the college's new and returning continuing education students as well as on the general population sample. This study allowed recommendations for cost reduction by indicating target areas and appropriate media types to achieve increased enrollment yield. Also, decisions can be made as to how to incorporate this evaluation process as a feedback loop into the planning process for future advertising.

Evaluation of the Impact of Media Marketing Strategies on Continuing Education Enrollments

Introduction

In alignment with national predictions, the State University of New York College at Brockport (SUNYCB) has experienced a decline in total enrolled students, both in headcount and in full time equivalents. Prospects of reversing this trend are hampered by a 24% decrease in the pool of high school graduates projected for 1985. In part, to offset enrollment difficulties, there has been increased emphasis on attracting non-matriculating students through credit-course enrollments in the College's Continuing Education component.

To determine advertising impact and effectiveness, an exploratory evaluation was conducted. The media advertising types assessed were television, radio and newspaper. The primary purposes of this study were:

1. to examine and to evaluate the College's existing media marketing strategies.
2. to identify the marketing conducted through the local media by other area colleges.
3. to determine the differential impact of media type.
4. to determine the cost effectiveness of media advertising.
5. to provide recommendations for improvement.

Literature Review

"Adult Population Pools, Adult Participation Rates and Projected Adult Credit Enrollment at Colleges and Universities in New York State,"

Braun (1980), specifically addressed the issue of adult enrollment in credit course programs to offset the declines in traditional college students. The author made it quite clear that for the loss of one traditional undergraduate, four adult learners were needed as an offset and at the graduate level three adults were needed. These ratios occurred due to the part-time nature of adults, resulting in implementation of part-time programs and in additional administrative costs.

Braun developed a series of projections through 1990 on the increase in the adult population pool over 25 years of age, the decrease in the pool of individuals under 25 years of age, and the college participation rates of each pool. The bottom line became: marketing strategies targeting adult enrollment can help offset the decline in traditional college students. However, in order to completely offset the decline, their participation rate would have to triple! Therefore, to ignore this population pool, would be to ignore a major source of potential students. But, colleges should not depend solely upon enrolling more adult students.

Kreutner and Godfrey in "Enrollment Management, A New Vehicle for Institutional Renewal," (1980), advocated a program which incorporated an Enrollment Management Model. It was implemented at the University of California at Long Beach. Essentially, this was a program for long and short range planning to control enrollment. Key features included collaborative relationships among Vice-Presidents to achieve goals which crossed divisional lines, assignment of responsibility for the system's management, an institution-wide commitment, and realignment of college functions that were central to the system's concept and process. The process itself was comprised of four modules: marketing services, enrollment services, retention services and research services. This was a closed system with the research component

serving as the data generator and as the evaluator to close the feedback loop by summarizing the activities of the other three modules.

The author's contentions were that marketing alone is an hygienic approach. Eventually, the pool of non-traditional students will also "dry up". In order for colleges to achieve success in determining their own futures rather than being molded by fluctuations in enrollment, they should institute a program for planning and redefining their enrollment goals.

Questionnaire Design and Methodology

Our first step was obtaining a list of television stations, radio stations and newspapers in the county and college advertising records during August and early September. Developing a telephone survey instrument was achieved using a collaborative approach with a brainstorming session followed by distribution to several individuals (i.e. Provost, Vice President for Administrative Services, Dean for Public Service and Continuing Education, etc.) for suggestions and comments. Once the survey instrument was finalized, we attempted to survey all of the approximately 400 continuing education students enrolled at SUNY College at Brockport in the Fall 1981 semester in credit-bearing courses. Of this group, 215 agreed to participate in the survey. Another 450 individuals comprised a random sample from the county in which the College is located. The 450 county-wide respondents were selected using a stratified random approach. With the telephone exchanges in the county providing equal area representation, a constant percentage of the population was drawn from each exchange. The final number of county-wide respondents participating in the survey was 290.

Analysis included the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (NIE et al, 1979) to determine the differential impact of

media types, media impact on our new and returning Continuing Education students and the impact on our sample of the general population. Analysis was conducted employing two specific techniques, i.e. frequencies and crosstabs.

Frequencies were obtained for certain data items to determine their relative importance. Crosstabs provided a comparison of the two sample populations and their differences on selected variables.

The analysis also compared the impact of our own advertising with the advertising impact of other area colleges' media efforts.

Results

As the first step in examining and evaluating Brockport's existing advertising strategies, the Continuing Education credit-course student sample was asked: "How did you hear about Brockport Continuing Education?" They were instructed to give multiple replies. Their responses were as follows:

	#	%
1. Mail	87	34.1
2. Students	78	30.6
3. Faculty/Staff	57	22.4
4. Newspaper	25	9.8
5. Television	4	1.6
6. Radio	4	1.6
Total	255	

The primary contact source was mail with 34.1 percent. Personal contact with students, and faculty/staff comprised another 30.6 percent and 22.4 percent, respectively. Thus, only 13 percent of SUNY College at

Brockport's 215 Continuing Education sample heard about Brockport through the local media. The electronic media with only 1.6 percent each fared more poorly than newspapers (9.6 percent).

Another question was posed to both groups: "During this past summer, did you see or hear any advertisements for Brockport's Continuing Education Program?" There were 152 affirmative responses, 92 credit-course students and 60 individuals from the county-wide sample. The most remembered advertising medium was overwhelmingly newspapers with 119 responses, television was second with 39 responses and finally, radio with 30 responses.

An additional question was asked of both groups to determine whether the marketing strategies encouraged previous students to continue and/or drew new students. The question posed was: "Have you previously taken Brockport Continuing Education courses for credit and/or non-credit." Respondents were instructed to answer either yes or no for each type. The following chart illustrates the responses.

	CREDIT STUDENT				COUNTY-WIDE SAMPLE			
	YES		NO		YES		NO	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Previously Took Credit Course	111	51.6	104	48.4	8	2.9	271	96.8
Previously Took Non-Credit Course	8	3.7	207	96.3	2	.7	276	98.9

From this information, we can deduce that 111 Brockport students were continuing, or returning to their studies, and 104 were enrolled for the first time in a credit-generating course. Of those 104 students, most were new to the institution since, of the students taking credit courses, an insignificant number had previously taken non-credit courses. Therefore, non-credit participation does not tend to generate credit-course enrollments.

A second aspect of this research was to identify advertising conducted through the local media by other area colleges. Survey participants in each group were asked: "During this past summer, did you see or hear any advertisements for any other colleges in your area?" Multiple replies specifying colleges were requested. The responses of each group are shown in Table 1 for each college named. Within each group it was notable that the Brockport credit students differed from the county-wide sample in their awareness of media advertising. Where the Brockport students primarily recalled ads for one or two colleges, the county-wide sample consistantly recalled ads for three and four colleges. This validated earlier findings that Brockport credit-course students heard about the college through the mail, students and faculty-staff rather than through the various media.

In addition, Table 1 indicates the overall impression achieved through the advertising of various types of colleges, i.e., 2-year public, 4-year private and master, university. The most visible impact was achieved by "A," a 2-year public institution with 28.4 percent of the combined groups recalling their ads. A university, "E," with 24.6 percent and one 4-year private and masters college , "C," with 23.1 percent also acheived lasting impressions.

When survey participants were questioned on "other college advertisements" mentioned previously, they were also asked to identify the particular medium through which they saw, heard or read the ad. There was a noticeable difference between the two sample groups. Again, the Brockport students remembered fewer ads, plus, they were less likely to identify specific stations or publications. The county-wide sample respondents were more discriminating, naming particular TV stations,

TABLE 1

Other College Advertisements

College Code	COLL 1 CRDT STDT	COLL 1 CNTY SMPL	COLL 2 CRDT STDT	COLL 2 CNTY SMPL	COLL 3 CRDT STDT	COLL 3 CNTY SMPL	COLL 4 & 5 CRDT STDT	COLL 4 & 5 CNTY SMPL	COLLEGE TOTALS CRDT STDT #	COLLEGE TOTALS CRDT STDT %	COLLEGE TOTALS CNTY SMPL #	COLLEGE TOTALS CNTY SMPL %	GRAND TOTALS #	GRAND TOTALS %
2 Yr. Public														
A	32	50	7	16	4	6	0	3	43	32.1	75	26.7	118	28.4
4 Yr. Private & Masters														
B	13	5	5	4	2	2	0	9	20	15.0	20	7.1	40	9.6
C	15	16	12	24	3	18	1	7	31	23.1	65	23.1	96	23.1
D	11	6	4	2	0	2	0	6	15	11.2	16	5.7	31	7.5
University														
E	6	46	9	22	0	16	0	3	15	11.2	87	31.0	102	24.6
Other														
F	7	10	2	3	1	1	0	4	10	7.5	18	6.4	28	6.7
Column Totals														
	84	133	39	71	10	45	1	32	134	32.1	281	67.9	415	100.0

Legend

CRDT/STDT = Brockport Continuing Education Credit Student
CNTY/SMPL = Stratified Random County-Wide Sample
COLL = College

and newspapers.

For both groups, the major observations were that newspapers were the strongest medium with 287 responses or 60.8 percent, although 68.6% of these responses were not for a specific paper. Television was second with 143 responses or 30.3 percent, while 77.6% were not for specific stations. Radio captured only 42 responses or 8.9 percent, and 41 of the 42 responses were for an unspecified station.

In attempting to gather budget data to determine the cost effectiveness of SUNY College at Brockport's advertising for Summer 81, it became apparent that there were three primary areas to consider. Community Relations (News Services), Fine Arts, and Public Service and Continuing Education. In addition, academic departments developed and distributed many individual advertisements at their own initiative. This resulted in the inability to calculate accurate and complete cost analyses. Budget information that was available is as follows:

Community Service	- $3,475	annual advertising
Fine Arts	- 590	Summer 81 advertising
Public Service & Continuing Education	- 7,400	Annual printing and mailing

In addition, $20,000-$25,000 was spent on a television advertisement referred to as an "image" piece in the Spring of 1981.

SUMMARY:

Brockport currently spends a great deal of money on advertisements and recruitment for Continuing Education students, but our own Continuing Education students and a county sample do not seem to be very aware of them. Both groups are, in fact, more aware of other college advertisements thar our own. The electronic media appear to have had little or no impact

on either group, and this finding is important since the costs are highest in these areas. Newspapers seem to be the most effective media for both groups and the relatively low cost makes it an attractive option. Direct mail is an effective approach, as well, and should be continued.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Centralize marketing/advertising to unify pieces and present a positive image of the college. Evaluate each piece to determine impact, effectiveness and cost/benefit.
2. Concentrate on direct mail and newspaper advertisements for the Continuing Education market.
3. Reduce or eliminate radio and TV advertisements unless their implementation focuses on a well defined group and can be expected to achieve measurable results. An evaluation component is particularly important in this area because of the potentially unfavorable cost/benefit ratio.
4. Word of mouth is an important recruitment strategy—whether faculty or students—and it has been shown to be the most frequently mentioned source of information. Continued efforts are needed to insure a quality educational product so that the reputation of the Continuing Education component will serve as its own recruitment device.

References

Braun, E. Adult population pools, adult participation rates and projected adult credit-enrollment at colleges and universities in New York State. In D. Green (ed.), Institutional research in the decade ahead: enhancing performance. Northeast Association - Institutional Research, 1980, pp 171-180.

Kreutner, L. and Godfrey, E. S. Enrollment management a new vehicle for institutional renewal. The college board review, No. 118, Winter 1980-'81.

Nie, N. H., Hull, C. H., Jenkins, J. G., Steinbrenner, K., and Bent, C. H. (Eds.) SPSS statistical package for the social sciences. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979.